

ASSEMBLYMEMBER
NICOLE PARRA

Representing the 30th Assembly District

**Parra Notes****June 15, 2008**

Hello Friends,

June 15 marks the annual date for the State Legislature to pass a budget. Sadly, this date has come to more accurately reflect the dysfunctional budget process that has resulted in delay, anxiety, and a lack of clearly identified state priorities.

www.dof.ca.gov/budgeting/budget_faqs/#16

In my six years in the State Assembly, the Legislature has never passed a budget on time. There are a number of reasons, including the fact that California is one of only three states in the nation that does not require a simple majority. Term limits have left both the State Assembly and Senate without members well-versed in the many nuances of state revenue and expenditure. Today, there is also a much greater percentage of the budget allocated specifically for various programs and agencies. Thus, fewer dollars can be shifted to reflect changing priorities.

This year's budget crisis creates both a number of problems and opportunities for the State. We have already begun witnessing the problems. Teachers being laid-off. Health clinics either closing or on the verge of closing. Police departments unable to hire needed officers. Many of you from the 30th Assembly District have called, written or visited to express the impacts of the crisis on our communities.

However, we can also take this severe budget crunch and use it as an opportunity. Democrats and Republicans are locked in negotiations for the foreseeable future. We should use these negotiations to include fixes to our budget process. **I call on my colleagues to pass a budget that is balanced, with plans for adequate reserves in times of plenty. Let's pass a budget that does not contain accounting gimmicks, that does not leave us in another significant deficit in a couple of years, and that reduces our budgetary debt.**

I have often been one of the few Democratic voices rising against wringing new sources of revenue. But this year, everything needs to be on the table for discussion. A "cuts-only" budget will simply not suffice. We must look at ways to increase revenue, including reviewing California's antiquated system of taxation that remains heavily reliant on income tax.

We all know that nobody will get everything they want in this year's budget. We will all share in the pain. **But we can pass a budget we are for, rather than one we are against. We can use the**

budget to demonstrate our priorities: education, public safety, protecting the most vulnerable. We can pass a budget that does not leave future generations in debt. And we can pass a budget while negotiating long-term fixes to our flawed budget process.

It is my hope that in the future, June 15 will mark a time of shared hopes and congratulations on a budget that is balanced, fair, and forward-looking. In the meantime, please know that I am listening to your concerns and conveying them to my colleagues with the intent on safeguarding the interests and priorities of the 30th Assembly District.

What's Happening in Sacramento

Governor Schwarzenegger on June 12 declared a drought emergency in nine Fresno, Kern, Kings, Tulare, Madera, Merced, Sacramento, and San Joaquin counties, ordering state agencies to carry out creative water deliveries to help. The proclamation is meant to help farmers who unexpectedly got an extra cut in federal water supplies after planting crops. The declaration also makes affected farmers eligible for federal disaster aid.

The filing period for the Homeowner and Renter Assistance Program begins on July 1, 2008. The program runs from July 1 through October 15, and allows a once-a-year payment from the State of California to qualified individuals based on part of the property taxes assessed, or rent paid. To receive additional information, call the Franchise Tax Board at (800) 868-4171 or visit them at www.ftb.ca.gov/individuals/hra/index.shtml

My Legislative Highlights

I presented my resolution, ACR 129 before the Assembly Health Committee. The resolution brings attention to cardiovascular health. Heart disease affects more than 1.7 million Californians. It is the leading cause of death in California. Cardiovascular health is an especially important issue in the Central Valley and to disadvantaged communities. My resolution would call on the State Department of Public Health to examine current and prospective programs, treatment, education, and awareness of cardiovascular disease that are needed for a thriving and healthy California. **It passed unanimously out of committee and will next be heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.**

I proudly co-authored a letter from the California State Legislative Rural Caucus to Senate and Assembly leadership to oppose recent proposed funding cuts to local law enforcement programs. Specifically, we opposed the deletion of funding for a number of programs, including the Small/Rural Sheriffs Grants, Local Detention Facility Subventions, and Citizens' Option for Public Safety. Cutting this funding will severely impact the ability of law enforcement officials in rural areas to protect our communities.

I enjoyed the opportunity to speak to approximately 35 members of the **California Latino Capitol Association** during a "Brown Bag" luncheon. **Assemblymember Bonnie Garcia** (R-Cathedral City) and I shared personal stories, our paths to the State Assembly, and our priorities to this group

of intelligent young women and men.

Constituents Visit Sacramento

I enjoyed meeting with many students from Bakersfield City College and taking them down to the Assembly Floor. Approximately 45 students aligned with the Center for Kern Political Education came to Sacramento on a field trip. The group included student body government students from Bakersfield City College, *We the People* high school competition students, a Bakersfield College Political Science class, and a few current and former Political Science professors.

It was a pleasure meeting with representatives from the **Children's Hospital Central California**. They were in Sacramento as part of the statewide association's "Lobby Days" to discuss the budget crisis and the Children's Hospital Bond Act of 2008 that will be on the November ballot. I am always appreciative of the wonderful work Children's Hospital does for our at-risk kids in the Central Valley and throughout California. www.ccha.org

In the District

The State Allocation Board (SAB) allocates general obligation bond funds to school districts under the School Facility Program. Over the past ten years, the program has allocated almost \$500 million to schools in the 30th Assembly District. The State Allocation Board is responsible for determining the allocation of state resources (proceeds from General Obligation Bond Issues and other designated State funds) used for the new construction and modernization of local public school facilities. The SAB is also charged with the responsibility for the administration of the School Facility Program, the State Relocatable Classroom Program, and the Deferred Maintenance Program. To find out how your school can apply for new or additional funding, visit: www.opsc.dgs.ca.gov/AboutUs/aboutSAB.htm

The California Department of Transportation announced funding for a number of projects in the 30th Assembly District through the Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA). The PTMISEA is one of the programs included in Proposition 1B. **Congratulations to the City of Delano, Golden Empire Transit District in Bakersfield, and Fresno County Rural Transit Agency for receiving funds for various projects under this program.**

Kudos to the Wasco Affordable Housing. They received a loan from the California Department of Housing and Community Development for land acquisition and pre-development costs to develop an affordable multi-family housing project in Wasco in Kern County. These funds will help expand housing opportunities for all Californians.

Meeting Requests

If you or your organization would like to set up a time to meet with me or would like for me to attend an event you are sponsoring, please feel free to contact my **Executive Secretary Rozanne Jones** at (916) 319-2030 or by e-mail at Rozanne.Jones@asm.ca.gov

Internships

I am accepting applications for the internship program in my **Hanford, Bakersfield** and **Sacramento** offices. Candidates should be residents of the **30th Assembly District**, possess solid research and communication skills, and have a strong interest in public policy and political issues facing the **Central Valley**. Applications can be found by going to:

<http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a30>.

For Hanford office internships contact **Richard Valle** at (559) 585-7170 or by e-mail at:

Richard.Valle@asm.ca.gov

For Bakersfield office internships contact **Nerissa Robinson** at (661) 334-3745 or by e-mail at:

Nerissa.Robinson@asm.ca.gov

For Sacramento office internships contact **Derek Chernow** at (916) 319-2030 or by e-mail at:

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